

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the Learned

Society of *Lincoln's-Inn*,

On JANUARY 30. 1732.

From JOB. xxxiv. 30.

*That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People
be ensnared.*

To which is subjoined,

A Supplement to the said Sermon.

By a L A Y M A N.

*Fieri potest, quod fit in multis quæstionibus, ut res
verbosior illa fit, hæc verior.*

C I C.

The F O U R T H E D I T I O N.

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N the Thirty-fourth Chapter of the Book of *Job*, and the Thirtieth Verse, it is thus written: - - - -
That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared.

Friends, Brethren, and Countrymen,

I present myself before you, on this Occasion, with the greater Alacrity and Assurance, for that I am conscious of no Engagement to any Party or Opinion repugnant to Truth, and the general Interest of my Country: I am under no Pay or Influ-

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ence to support ancient Prejudices and false Reasonings; under no Biais to flatter particular Fraternities and Factions, nor awed by the Fear of offending them. For the Rule and Guide of my Politics, I have the Constitution and History of *England*; and in my Religion, I am governed by the Bible and common Sense. He who walks by these Rules walks securely; and he who follows the arbitrary Notions, sophistical Distinctions, and bare Averments of Men, is sure to be deceived, at least can never know that he is not.

That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared.

The Task which from these Words I propose to myself, is to defend the Right of every Man to private Judgment and Opinion, to shew the Absurdity and Wickedness of setting up Authority against Conscience, and to manifest the pernicious Tendency and Effects of Power and immoderate Wealth in the Clergy. As I go along, I shall apply my Reasoning to the Purpose of the Day; and, at the Conclusion, add a Word concerning the unhappy Prince, whose Blood was shed on this Day; with the proper Use to be made of it.

Good Sense is our first and last Guide, since by that we are to judge of all other Guides; and there is more Sound than Meaning in the Objection which some make to the Guidance of Reason, when they ask, *Whether we are to judge of that by which we are to be judged*, namely, the holy Scriptures, since we must recur to Reason to know whether the Scriptures be holy, and whether we are to be judged by them. 'Tis to little Purpose to tell us,
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That for this we must take the Word and Authority of holy Men. For, we must still consult our Reason, whether these be holy Men or no, and whether we ought to believe them or no; seeing there are many Sets of Men all pretending to be holy, all claiming this Authority to themselves only, and all denying it to every other Set.

Our Reason must therefore determine, which of all these are the most holy, and whether any of them be more so than ourselves. If the Ways of Holiness and of Knowledge be as obvious to us as to them, we may have as much of either as they have; and in truth, the Sources of both are as open to us as to them. Besides, it ought to mortify their Pride, and be a Lesson of Humility to them, as it is surely one of Caution to us, to see that they never agree with one another; that even those of the same Society, professing the same Faith, subscribing the same Articles, and professing to believe the same Scriptures, agree not in the Rules and Explanations which they exhibit to us. Great is their Variance, not only about Ceremonies, Circumstantial and Discipline, but even about Essentials, about Principles to be believed, about Duties to be practised, and even about the Nature, Operations and Attributes of the Deity: nay, equally great and signal is their Want of mutual Charity, as is their Want of mutual Concord. Are these to be our Guides, who thus pull us various and opposite Ways? Can they teach mutual Love and Forbearance, who hate and revile each other? And is it not notable want of Modesty in them, who cannot agree with one another, to expect that we should agree with them all, or with any of them, when we approve not, or comprehend not what they say, or

when what they say is evidently for their Interest and against ours, as all their Aims at Power and Wealth evidently are ?

This Reasoning, if it be true, as I think it is, will serve to condemn Archbishop *Laud* and his Associates, who exacted a blind Obedience to their own Tenets and Schemes, a rigid Conformity to all their Ceremonies, Inventions and Innovations, and cruelly persecuted all who preferred Conscience to Complaisance, and were better Christians than Churchmen and Courtiers.

Surely it ought to check and cool the Fierceness of Religionists of all Sorts towards each other about Difference in Opinion, to behold how flaming and rigorous every Man is in behalf of his own ; to behold the most ridiculous and pernicious Opinions defended with equal Obstinacy and Bitterness. *The Jew*, the *Papist*, the *Mahometan*, the *Banian*, have all equal Satisfaction in their own several Systems, have all equal Detestation for one another, and for every different Sect.

Is not this a pregnant Proof, that all this furious Zeal is false Zeal, that it is all miserable Bigotry and Prejudice, or constitutional Intemperance of Spirit ? A zealous *Jew*, had he been bred a *Papist*, would have been equally zealous for Popery, and perhaps for burning those very *Jews* who are now his Brethren. Had the late Dr. *Sacheverell* been educated in the *Scottish* Kirk, he would doubtless have breathed as fierce Persecution against Prelacy, as he has done for it ; and treated it with as foul and uncomely Names, as he treated Dissenters and false Brethren.

The same is true of Archbishop *Laud*, and of other hasty and passionate Zealots ; provided always, that

that all other Preferments in another way be taken away; else the Batteries of their Zeal are often quickly changed, and turned against the Party for whom they were first erected: Witness *Parker* Bishop of *Oxford*, and *Ward* Bishop of *Sarum*, once both holy, praying, and rigid Presbyterians, afterwards both rigid Persecutors of Presbyterians. Is it not probable that they would have died Presbyterians, had the Church Preferments been out of their Reach?

This Consideration therefore, that every Man is fond of his own Opinions, and not the less fond for their being very foolish and extravagant, ought to keep Men from quarrelling about any Opinions, and to look upon those who promote such Quarrels, as Monsters and their worst Enemies. This Enmity about Notions, Chimeras, Ceremonies, and other idle Disputes; this War about Words, and Creeds, and Articles, a War and Dispute which have produced such mighty Bloodshed and Desolation in the World, has been the sole Work and Contrivance of ambitious Clergymen; who, for Ends of their own, and the Gratification of their Pride and Fury, and other evil Passions, had the Art and Cruelty to make the Laity thus to persecute and butcher one another. What infamous Inhumanity was this in Clergymen? What Frenzy and Infatuation in the Laity? But such are ever the Effects of implicate Belief, which is naturally followed by implicate Obedience, which is the certain Beginning as well as the certain Consequence of Slavery. All this Evil, Uncharitableness and Barbarity, arose from the wicked and impossible Attempt to force or suppress private Judgment and Conscience. Of such mighty Consequence it is,
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that the Hypocrite reign not ; since where-ever he does, the People will surely be ensnared.

What added to this Evil and Insolence, this hellish Cruelty upon the Score of Opinion, and made it still more provoking and intolerable, was, that it was all perpetrated in the Name of Christ, of the meek Jesus, and said to be for his Church and Cause: A Declaration so impudent and incredible, that it could only be made by Men who were void of Shame, to Men who wanted Eyes. It was as false as the Gospel was true ; nor could a Revelation which inspired or warranted any Degree of Bitterness or Cruelty, ever have come from God, or from any but the Antagonist of God and Enemy of Man, from Hypocrites reigning, that is, tyrannizing in the Name of the Lord.

Yet so these hardened Deluders argued, trusting to the Power of Delusion ; especially when to that Power of Delusion they had added a good Share of Secular Power : And before they could make the Laity such blind Tools as to be the Tormentors and Executioners of one another, they had eradicated every Grain and Principle of Christianity out of their Hearts, yet made them believe themselves the only true Christians.

This was the Use which such Clergymen made of the boundless Trust and Power given them by the Laity ; and over the Laity they exercised it without Bounds or Mercy. Such was the Power of *Land* and the Clergy of his Time, and such the unhallowed and inhuman Use which they made of it ; yet that Use was the usual and natural Use, the Power itself being unnatural. Indeed, worldly Power and Opulence in such as preach the Gospel, are so repugnant to the Spirit and Precepts of the Gospel, that it is no wonder they cannot thrive or indeed
subsist

subsist together; but the Gospel must either destroy them, or they the Gospel. It is too visible on which Side the Victory has chiefly turned. Whatever fills Men with Pride and Hatred, and prompts them to Severity and Revenge, may be Popery or Mahometanism, but is just as contrary to Christianity, as Christianity is to all Pride and Hatred, to all Rigour and Vengeance.

From hence it is plain who they are, what Set of Men, that have hurt and abused, perverted and abolished Christianity most. I am sorry to say it, but it is too true, that in many Countries and at many Times, the Church and Religion have been very distinct and opposite things: Sure I am, that I have seen very good Churchmen who were very bad Christians, and some who were no Christians at all. I will not say that *Laud* was no Christian; but I may boldly affirm, that he resembled not the first Christians, nor possessed a Christian Temper: An extreme good Churchman I readily own him.

That it is not Religion or Christianity, but chiefly, if not only, Passion and Prejudice, which determine Men to a Fondness for their own Set of Notions and for their own Community, appears from hence, that if a vicious Man be on their Side, especially if he profess much Zeal for his Party, they cherish and extol him; whilst upon a very unblameable and pious Man, who is not of their Party, they are apt to bestow very ill Language, and often ill Usage. This is not the Spirit of true Religion, but of Passion and Partiality: Yet this Spirit too many derive from their particular Religion, which they think the best, but which surely is very bad; and 'twere better they had none, than one which banishes their Reason and Humanity. Now if such a Spirit should ever happen to possess those who profess

selfs to be our Guides, we may judge how wise and safe it would be to trust to their Guidance, or even to own them as Guides. Had there been no such Guides about an hundred Years ago, we should not in all likelihood have had this Day now to solemnize. The strange Doctrines and bitter Oppressions in those Days, naturally produced such a Day as this Day.

'Tis not Religion, at least not the Christian Religion, that heats and animates such Men; 'tis only Faction, a Complication of evil and unhallowed Passions. Whoever loves or hates, blesses or curses, from Anger or Fondness, from Obligation or Resentment, belies Religion, if he pretend under its holy Name to hide base Ends and a worldly and partial Heart. 'Tis by such selfish and unworthy Ways that the Church and Religion have sometimes come to signify contradictory things: 'Tis thus that Men who have had no Religion or Virtue, have been extolled as excellent Churchmen: 'Tis thus that Men of the highest Religion and Virtue, have been, and often are reviled and condemned as bad Churchmen; and 'tis thus that pious Christians have been punished, sometimes burned, by such as were special Churchmen, but not Christians. And indeed, whenever such false Zealots manifest such a Spirit of Impatience, of Rage and Reviling, they cannot give a clearer Proof that such Spirit is not of Christ, since 'tis so opposite to his Spirit. Nor can Men, who shew themselves full of Bitterness and Want of Charity, be at all commissioned by him, who was all Meekness, and gave to his Disciples a new Commandment, that they should *love one another*, and even *love their Enemies*. Yet who so sudden to wax wroth as many of his pretended Successors? Who more forward and unmanly in calling unseemly Names;

a Practice as common with many of them, as with the meanest Men, and even the lowest Sort of Women? *Heretick, Atheist, Infidel*, are amongst such Churchmen Words of Reproach, equivalent to the foul Language which the Vulgar throw at one another, and equally shocking to well bred Men and true Christians.

Surely, from Men who come from God, and are Vicegerents to his Son, one would naturally expect a God-like Behaviour, with an uncommon Store of Christian Meekness and Benevolence. How does Rage, how do gross Names of Abuse, how does Uncharitableness, Revenge, Avarice, Ambition, and the most savage Passions and Demeanour, suit with a Commission from Heaven, and the Gift of the Holy Ghost?

I proceed now to discourse more directly upon the undue Wealth and Power of the Clergy, and the great Evils attending the same; from whence will appear the Calamities and certain Thralldom attending *the Reign of Hypocrites*.

The Clergy, whenever they were left to take as much Power and Wealth as they pleased, rarely thought the Whole too much; nor do I remember any Instance where-ever they owned that they had enough. Thus they have engrossed some Countries whole; of others the greatest and best Parts; and as much as they could of all. Where they have the Soil they have the Power in course; and where they have both, (that is to say, in Popish Countries) they are the most unmerciful of all Landlords, and the most oppressive of all Magistrates. Look over the fine Continent of *Italy*, and other Climes where Priests riot and tyrannize; you will find the Laity there and every where starving, when the Clergy are the Land Owners.

Ought not the Laity in other Countries to take warning by this? And is it not monstrous and unnatural for any Number of Laymen to concur with the Clergy in their exorbitant Claims? Should not the Laity too learn by the Example of the Clergy, to take care of themselves? What Wealth the Clergy have, they have from the Laity: By the Power that they seek or assume, they would bind and govern the Laity. Is it natural, or just, or wise in the Laity, to impoverish themselves in order to enrich the Clergy, to forge their own Chains, to exalt their own Creatures and Pensioners into Tyrants and Taskmasters, or to suffer them so to exalt themselves? Can they forget the Insolence and Tyranny of Archbishop *Laud*, the terrible Height of Power which he had usurped, with his aspiring Views to raise the Clergy above the Laity and the Law? Can they forget his saucy Declaration, that *he hoped to see the Time when ne'er a Jack Gentleman in England should dare to be covered before the meanest Priest*? And, as an Indication how much many of the Clergy thought, and wished, and designed as he did, they of this Stamp have been ever since adoring and extolling this usurping Archpriest, this Persecutor and Oppressor, this Instrument and Prompter of Oppression.

The Man who contends for Power and Riches to the Priests, is ever popular with the High-Priesthood, ever their Darling; nor are they always over anxious about the Soundness of either his Faith or Morals. Is not this too a Rule and Example to the Laity? And ought not the Laity to prize and protect, and encourage any Layman who asserts the Rights and Privileges of his Brethren the Laity? Is it not equally fair, and grateful, and honourable, to cherish and esteem any Clergyman,

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or Number of Clergymen, who are candid enough to maintain the Interest and Independency of the Laity? Is it not foolish, ungrateful, dishonest, and even barbarous, to revile, or evil-intreat such Clergymen; to abuse and weaken these our Friends, and to join with our Enemies, with such as would enthral us, and bring us under their blind Guidance? Where the Clergy are opulent, do not the People starve? Where the Clergy have Power, are not the People Slaves? Is it not thus in *Spain*, thus in *Italy*? In these Countries, where they are Proprietors of all Things, and govern all Men, can they be even said to be Teachers, or even to be Christians? No; their Teaching is deceiving, their Doctrines are Lies and Impieties, and their Lives antichristian. Christianity and Truth would undo them. They have therefore banished Christianity, and erected the Priesthood; and for Christ and Truth, they preach themselves and Fables. *Every one, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to Covetousness; from the Prophet even to the Priest, every one dealeth falsely,* Jer. viii. 10.

This is the Effect of Power and Wealth in Churchmen; two Things which have proved such a certain and heavy Curse upon Religion and the World, as if the holy Author of both meant thence to convince Mankind, how pernicious, how destructive they every-where are to his Church and People, and to warn all Men and Nations against suffering or encouraging them.

Great Power and Revenues in Churchmen have not only produced and multiplied every Mischief formerly known in the World; but also produced Mischiefs so new and terrible, as the World, even the Pagan World, never knew before; such as Persecution and Butchery for Conscience and Opinion, Wars and national Massacres for Religion, with that mighty

Compendium of all that is horrid, treacherous and cruel upon Earth, the execrable Tribunal of the Inquisition. What had Paganism so shocking and horrible. as to be compared to this? Not even their human Sacrifices, which were few in Comparison, occasional, and stated. The Inquisition is a continual human Slaughter-house; and in it Men, Myriads of Men, have been immolated, after tedious Macerations in dark and frightful Dungeons, after unrelenting Racks and Tortures, with every Species of Treachery, Misery and Terror; and all for the best Thing which they could do, for their Sincerity and Piety in worshipping the Deity in the Way which they were perswaded he liked best.

Now, as the Inquisition is nothing but the highest Improvement of Persecution, which begins with Tests and negative Penalties, but ends in Fires and Halters: I will enumerate a few of the many Causes for which Men are committed to it; and they are such and so various, that no Man who in the least exercises his own Faculties, or practises common Charity and Mercy, or even has common Commerce with the World, can avoid it. --- If he has heard a Heretick preach or pray; (that is, if he has thus heard the best and wisest Man upon Earth, who differs from the Extravagancies of Churchmen:) If when he is summoned, he appear not: If being excommunicate, he sue not for Absolution: If a Heretick (for Example, a Mr. *Locke*, or a Sir *Isaac Newton*) be his Friend: If he do any Act of Kindness for a Heretick; visit him, treat him, assist him, or shew him Pity, or give him Counsel: If he suspect the Truth of their lying Legends and forged Miracles: If he assert the Indifference of Meats or of Days, or interpret Scripture according to his own and to common Sense:

Sense : If he conceal any Heresy, his own or other People's : If he spare Father or Mother, Wife or Child, - - - he is for these, or any of these Causes, and for a Thousand others, liable to the unparalleled Cruelties of the Inquisition. Let me add, that by Heresy is meant every conscientious, honest, rational and benevolent Opinion, differing from the senseless, narrow, barbarous Whims and Grimaces of the Priests.

As a Proof what quick Havock such a Tribunal must make in a Country, Cardinal *Turquemedas*, the first Inquisitor-General in *Spain*, even in the Infancy of the Inquisition, brought an hundred thousand Souls into it in the small Space of fourteen Years : Of these, six thousand were burnt alive. Observe too, that when such Persons are seized, all that they have is also seized, and their Families left to starve, or sent thither too, if they shew pity, or attempt Assistance.

Can the merciful and wise God, can the meek and compassionate Jesus, who laid down his Life for Men, have any Thing to do with such a Church, or with such hellish Instruments and Butchers, impudently calling themselves *holy*, and their Scene of Butchery the *holy Office*? Wisely did our first Reformers disown her being a Church: *Laud* afterwards and his Followers laboured to restore her Credit, contended for her being a true Church, and even derived themselves from her; nay, strove to shew themselves worthy of the Kindred and Descent, by assuming her Pride and Cruelties: Witness their numerous Imprisonments, excessive Fines, Whippings, Dismembrings, and other Barbarities; to their own Infamy, and to the Dishonour of Protestants and of our Nation.

Equal to its other Horrors is the black Treachery practised by that detestable Court, and by all who belong to, or assist it. In order to ensnare a Man into the Inquisition, they will travel Countries, and cross the Seas, to become acquainted with him; will court, caress and flatter him, treat him, make him Presents, lend him Money, administer to his Pleasures, seem to love and adopt his Opinions, rail at the Church, curse his Persecutors and the Inquisition, and swear him an eternal Friendship. --- All with a black and murderous Purpose to seize him in a proper Place, and carry him off to the Fires and Racks of that infernal Tribunal. But where the Interest of that Church is concerned, Villany changes its Nature, and becomes meritorious; and the blackest Perfidy, and even Perjury, is esteemed and practised as good Policy. Thus the Pope's Legate, at the Head of a Crusade against the *Albigenses*, entrapped their Protector and General, the Count de *Beziers*, solemnly swore not to hurt him, and then seized and imprisoned him.

Let me just add upon this Head, That Blasphemy, or any outrageous Words and Defiance offered to Almighty God, is not punishable, nor cognisable in the Inquisition. The great Crime and Pursuit there, is Heresy; that is to say, Blasphemy against the Trade and Opinion of Priests. So that any profane Wretch may blaspheme God without Fear of the Inquisitors, provided he blaspheme like a good Churchman, and say nothing against the Priests or their Gear: But if Heresy be mixed with his Blasphemy, he cannot hope to escape. Most remarkable too and shocking is the Impudence and Hypocrisy of these Inquisitors, when after having long starved in their horrid Dungeons the wretched Offender; after having long terrified, misused and
tortured

tortured him, they at last deliver him over to the secular Arm: They have then the solemn Assurance, *to beseech the Civil Magistrate, in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, not to hurt his Life or Limb*; yet would excommunicate the Civil Magistrate, if he did not burn him alive.--- Such is the terrible Power and Falshood of *Hypocrites reigning*.

I am far from thinking that what I have said about the Inquisition is a Digression. That terrible Part of Popery, or indeed any other Part of Popery, which is all terrible, is too little known in *England*. For some time after the Reformation, a due Horror was kept up amongst the People by our Preachers against the Church of *Rome*: And it was done like Protestants, and is their Duty at all times; and they who omit it are unworthy of the Name, and I doubt have dark and unprotestant Designs. But when our Clergy began to contend for equal Dominion and Wealth, they found that they could not consistently rail at the Church of *Rome*, and yet follow her Example. And so far altered was their Stile at last, that instead of painting and reviling her, as *an old withered Harlot, the Mother of Abominations and Whoredoms, and drunk with the Blood of the Saints*, it became fashionable to defend her, nay, to praise her, and even to punish such as exposed her: Such uncommon Friends she found in *Laud* and his Adherents. It is true, he and some others of that Cast wrote Books against some Parts of Popery. But what signified writing against Papists, when he was introducing and practising Popery at home? For, all Cruelty, or even Severity for Opinion, and all Authority assumed over Conscience and the Soul, is Popery, by whatever Name it be called. Besides, it was natural for *Laud*, who was acting as Pope himself, to deny the
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Power of the other Pope, at least here; and for the bare Notions, the Ceremonies, the Grimaces and Mummery of Popery, they are of little Consequence, any farther than as they tend to introduce and preserve its Power, by creating or continuing Delusion in the People.

Laud and his Adherents were notorious Persecutors; and all Persecution is Popery; and every Degree of it, even the smallest Degree is an Advance towards the Inquisition. As negative Penalties are the first Degree, so Death and Burning is the last and highest; all the other Steps are but natural Gradations following the first Degree, and introducing the last. For the smallest implies the Necessity of a greater, where the former fails; and consequently of the greatest of all, which is the Inquisition.

Was it now at all wonderful, that *Laud* and his Associates were charged with being Papists, when they were openly introducing and exerting all the terrible Parts of Popery, Church Power and Persecution, and thus establishing Church Tyranny and an Inquisition? For, it was thus that that bloody Court was established; and the like Claims and Practices will always introduce and establish it. *Madam de Motteville*, in the Memoirs of *Anne of Austria*, says expressly, upon the Authority and Information of King *Charles the First's* Queen, that *Laud was a good Catholick in his Heart*. It is certain that he brought in what was most terrible in Popery, its Power and Cruelty, with not a few of its Fooleries and Superstitions. Whoever is a Tyrant and Persecutor is a Papist, in the only Sense of the Word that Protestants and Freemen are concerned about.

Let such as claim Power to controul Conscience and Opinion consider this, if they have not considered it already. Let those too over whom such Power is claimed consider it, and look upon the Men who claim it, as Enemies and Deceivers, that would seduce them in order to enslave them. How would any Man, any Protestant, (who dares own his Opinion) like the Inquisition? Without doubt he would abhor it: Let him likewise abhor the Ways and Practices that lead to it; for it is supported entirely by the Power of the Clergy, which never has, never can produce any Good. As Dominion over Thoughts and Notions is in itself a Monster, the greatest of all Monsters, it must be supported by monstrous Means, even by Priests wielding or directing the civil Sword; the pretended Followers of the humble Jesus, treading upon the Necks of Nations, engrossing their Wealth, and spilling their Blood.

Is any Man fond of his Liberty, as all Men naturally are, and of his own Opinions, (for this too is natural) and of examining all Opinions; which every Man has a Right to do? Would he worship God after his own Way, be subject to no Man's insolent Rebukes and Controul, be exempt from vexatious Suits and Prosecutions; from clerical Curses followed with civil Punishments, with Dungeons, and (as they say) with Damnation? Would he preserve his Conscience, his Person, his Time and his Property, and all that is dear to him, safe and entire? He is in consequence of all this obliged for ever to oppose all Power in the Clergy, as it has been ever found utterly repugnant to whatever is dear to Men and Societies. I know not that ever they possessed Power without using it perniciously: I know not that ever they could persecute and did not persecute: Such of them as had most

argued and inveighed against Persecution when they were under it, exercised it afterwards without Shame or Remorse, whenever they got the Rod into their own Hands. Thus the Catholicks acted against the *Arians*; thus the latter acted against the former; both complaining heavily of Persecution, both heavy Persecutors.

St. *Athanasius* could at one time argue, "that the Devil does therefore use Violence, because he has a bad Cause, and the Truth is not on his Side. Jesus Christ, on the contrary, uses only Exhortations, because his Cause is good: *If any Man will be my Disciple, let him follow me.* He forces no Man to follow him; nor enters by Force where he is shut out." Whence that Father observes, "that this persecuting Sect could not be of God." So argued all the Orthodox upon that Occasion, and I think very truly. St. *Hilary* urges the same Argument to an *Arian* Emperor and Persecutor, and denies the *Arians* to be the true Church, for this very Reason. But the Orthodox, when they were uppermost, changed their Tone; and never were there more merciless Persecutors, Oppressors, and Butchers than they. Hence their own Reasoning has been frequently turned upon them; and the Hereticks have charged them in their turn, as being none of Christ's Flock, because they had renounced his Spirit, and exercised Force and Cruelty. The *Donatists* particularly insulted them upon this unchristian Inconsistency.

But so it hath eternally happened, that no Reasoning, not even their own Reasoning, could ever restrain Churchmen, orthodox or heterodox, when they were invested with Power, or with the Direction of Power, from using it violently. The *Presbyterians* justly exclaimed against the Violence and Tyran-

ny of Archbishop *Laud* and his Brethren, for harassing, imprisoning, fining, and persecuting them, and even driving them from their native Homes, to seek Peace, and Shelter, and the quiet Worship of God in the Woods of *America*. He had converted the High Commission Court into an Inquisition: Nay, every Bishop's Court was become an Inquisition; and many of the best Churchmen were silenced, fined, and even deprived, for adhering honestly to the Doctrines of the Reformation, to primitive Strictness of Manners, and for observing the Sabbath.

Did the *Presbyterians* afterwards, these very *Presbyterians*, who had thus groaned and smarted under Persecution, and complained of its Injustice and Fury, exercise Charity and Forbearance towards others who dissented from them, when they were become Masters of ecclesiastical Rule? No: Never was a more bitter, untolerating Race, or more rigorous Exactors of Conformity. Every Man who differed from them was an Enemy to the State, an Innovator, forsooth, whom it behoved the State to suppress. They had forgot that *Laud* had brought the same Charge against them but a little before, and how unmercifully they had been then used as publick Incendiaries, Enemies, and Innovators. Nor do any Set of Priests fail to draw down, if they can, the Anger of the Crown upon any Man who has merited theirs. Thus the Monks of *St. Denis* in *France*, in the twelfth Century, accused the famous *Abelard*, then amongst them, with being an Enemy to the Glory and Crown of *France*, only for denying that their Founder was *Dionysius* the *Areopagite* mentioned in the New Testament. It is indeed a Charge which all domineering Priests in the World have ever brought, will ever bring

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against

against all who offend them, against all who withdraw from their Power, and disown their Systems. The *Presbyterians*, when undermost, felt this to be true, both before and afterwards; and always when they felt it, exclaimed against it; but took it up themselves without blushing, as soon as ever they tasted of Dominion.

The Churchmen too, they who had persecuted the *Presbyterians* without all Mercy, the Moment they found themselves persecuted by *Presbyterians*, made heavy Outcries against Persecution, and preached and wrote for Toleration. It was then that Dr. *Taylor* published his Book entituled, *The Liberty of Propheying*: An excellent Book it is, and was then extremely applauded by his Brethren of the Episcopal Profession. But did these Churchmen, did even Dr. *Taylor*, after the Restoration, observe their own Reasoning and Writings for Indulgence to Dissenters? No, it was the great Business of the Churchmen, when they had resumed their old Seats and Revenues, to preach, to write, to solicit severe Laws, and then the Execution of these Laws, against their Protestant Brethren, during all that long Reign.

Was not all this strangely inconsistent, as well as strangely unchristian, on both Sides? And was it not strange Madness, as well as Wickedness, in the Civil Power, to gratify the sower and aspiring Spirit of the Ecclesiasticks, by plaguing and punishing the People about Religion? There is no End of their Demands, nor of the Unreasonableness of such Demands. In *Spain*, where they profess to burn Hereticks, that is to say, *Protestants*, they complain of it at the same Time, as Persecution in a Protestant Country, to imprison a *Romish* Priest, however factious and busy he be in perverting of
Protestants.

Protestants. The High Clergy in *England*, though avowed Enemies to a Toleration here, would think it terrible Persecution to deny it to themselves, or their Brethren in *Scotland*. Ay, but we of the Church of *England* are the true Church of Christ, says the *English* Episcopalian : And so says *Rome* of herself, so says *Scotland*, so says *Geneva* and *Greece*, and so say all Churches in the World ; and each of them would persecute and abolish all the rest as false or defective.

This is not the Spirit of Religion, nor of its Author, but an open Departure from that Spirit. It is the Spirit of Faction and Fury, which utterly blinds Men, and extinguishes that of Peace and Charity, without which Men cannot be Followers of Christ. Did we not daily see it, it would be incredible, to what Extravagancies religious Disputes will carry Men. *Daniel Tilenus*, a learned Man, and publick Professor (I think, of Divinity) became so heated in favour of *Arminianism*, in opposition to *Calvinism* and Predestination, that he declared, were he obliged to change his Religion, he would turn *Turk* sooner than *Calvinist* ; for he denied that the *Calvinists* believed in God, and owned that the *Turks* did. *Grotius*, when Ambassador for *Sweden* in *France*, had two Chaplains, a *Calvinist* and a *Lutheran*, who preached by Turns. What they principally laboured was to revile one another, and their Sermons were only Invectives. The Ambassador, tired and ashamed of the Extravagancies of these Reverend Madmen, begged them to explain the Gospel without wounding Christian Charity. This good Advice neither of them relished. His *Lutheran* Chaplain particularly replied, that *he must preach what God inspired* ; and went on in the old Strain. For, all the Ravings of
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hot-headed Divines are fathered upon God. *Grotius* at last ordered him either to forbear Railing or Preaching. The meek Preacher turned away in great Wrath, expressing his Amazement, that *a Christian Ambassador should shut the Mouth of the Holy Ghost*. This he thought terrible Usage, and Persecution, and published his Complaints every where, *that Grotius had shut the Mouth of the Holy Ghost*; that is, his Chaplain's Mouth.

I return to consider the Consequences of Power and great Wealth in the Clergy. These Acquirements of Opulence and Dominion were so foreign to the first preaching of the Gospel, so little known to its Author and his Disciples, that 'tis no Wonder they assorted so ill with it, and at last so strangely transformed it, and even banished all but the Name. What can be seen of Christ and his Humility, of the Apostles and their Poverty, in the Pomp and Pride, in the Fierceness and Domination of Priests? Is ought of the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel to be found in the Intricacies of School Divinity, in the endless Wranglings and wonderful Distinctions of Ecclesiasticks? Does the Pope, or such as resemble or would resemble the Pope, bear any Likeness of Christ, or of *St. Peter*? Did the Ambition of the Bishops and Clergy, their Avidity for Power and rich Churches, for which they contended with Blows, and Bloodshed and Slaughter, come from Christ, or from the Genius of his Religion? Were the Seditious, Tumults and War which ensued such ambitious Pursuits, the Effects of a Christian, or of a Clerical Spirit? Yet were not such Evils and terrible Calamities immediately derived from the Thirst of the Clergy after Grandeur and Authority?

At first they had no Revenue but Alms, and of these Alms they had only a Share; but to that Share they at last added (I had almost said feloniously) the Whole, cheating the Donors, and robbing the Poor. They afterwards greatly enlarged these Revenues (which were at first chiefly usurped) by Arts and Contrivances sufficiently wicked and vile, even by deceiving silly Women and Bigots, and selling them Salvation for present Money and Rents; by terrifying the Weak and Dying, and forcing them to compound for Heaven, by parting with all that they possessed on Earth. Father *Paul*, that rational and honest Clergyman, says, that the Church is beholden for her greatest Legacies and Donations, to the Bounty of infamous Women, Strumpets and Prostitutes; or to that of peevish People, who thus gratified their Spite towards their own Blood and Relations. And as the Church had no Riches but what were freely given her, or taken and gotten unjustly by her; so she had no Power but what was either begged or usurped. What Use they have made of both, we have already seen. It is most natural, that what is ill gotten, should be ill used.

It would make a curious History, to discover and explain minutely, from what particular Men, and by what particular Arts and Application, every Farm, every Estate and Donation now possessed by Churchmen, was at first acquired. I question whether any Revenues in the World were ever so wickedly procured, since to enrich the Church, all Means, even Wickedness, Murder and Impiety, were deemed lawful. Thus Assassins and Blasphemers merited Protection and Absolution; Tyranny and Oppression were warranted and sanctified; holy Snares were laid, false Terrors spread, Miracles forged,

forged, God's Name belied, and Jesus and his blessed Mother profanely personated by Priests, to delude Enthusiasts; as if these heavenly Beings had thus honoured them with a Visit in Person.

It were endless to enumerate all the Arts and Impieties, Impostures and Lies, by which Churchmen formerly filled their Coffers, at the Expence and through the Stupidity of Laymen. And though no Possessions were ever so impiously obtained, I never heard any Instance of their parting with them from Remorse or Shame, even whilst the right Heirs, by being thus deprived of their Estates, were starving, and the Possessors (or rather Usurpers) gorged with more Wealth than they could use even in their Luxury and Debauches. Whatever was once annexed to the Church, in these Days of Usurpation and Darkness, (however knavishly or violently obtained) was forthwith sacred and unalienable: Nay, it became no less than Sacrilege, to divest her of what she had gained by Robbery and Fraud. For, whatever was once hers, even her Frauds and Crimes, were holy; and it was profane to censure them, or indeed to see them; and he was profane, nay atheistical, who did it. Whoever found Fault with the Church, was an Enemy to the Church; and he who was an Enemy to the Church, was an Atheist. Hence the frequent and ridiculous Application of Atheism and Blasphemy, till these two Words, of themselves very awful, grew contemptible. As to the Quantity of the Church's Wealth, she never knew any Stint or Bounds; but whilst the Laity had to give, she took, till in some Countries she had all, and they Rags and no Bread.

Even in this Protestant Nation it is computed, that they have a fifth Part of our Wealth; yes, that
fifteen

fifteen or twenty thousand Priests are endowed with the fifth Part of the Property of eight Millions of People. Are they satisfied with this? And do they never aim at more, or complain of this as too little? If they do, 'tis not for the Reputation of their Modesty? I am sorry to add, that they are in a Way of draining and monopolizing all the Wealth of *England*. It is thought, that the Revenue of the Churchmen is at present as large as in the Times Popery, notwithstanding the Demolition of so many Monasteries, and the Seizure of their Revenues; considering that the Clergy then maintained the Poor, who are now supported chiefly by the Laity, at an immense Charge, no less than two Millions a Year. There are indeed some Individuals who have very small Salaries: But whose Fault is that? Are there not others, who wallow in Thousands, yet do less Duty than such as are in constant Service with Appointments of ten or twenty Pounds a Year? Why should not the Wealth of the Church be more equally and charitably divided. But so it often is, that the more Churchmen have, the more they seek, yet the less they do. To all this I wish it were not in my Power to add, but it is true, and I must add it, that whatever Corruptions have crept into the Church, did so by the Contrivance, at least by the Connivance of Churchmen, and were never afterwards removed by their Consent.

They are always forward to complain of Innovations, and of disturbing Things that are settled. But who have made more Innovations than Churchmen? Who have more disturbed and changed Religion and States, by their Ambition, by their Disputes, by their turbulent Behaviour and exorbitant Claims? And who are so much given to Change? What Changes, what violent and lawless Changes,

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were there not wrought by *Laud* and his Brethren in his Time, and always attempted by those of his Spirit ever since? The Laity have been only on the defensive, warding off the Attempts and monstrous Demands of such of the Clergy, and answering their wild Writings. What is a great Part of Ecclesiastical History, but a continual Detail and Repetition of the Efforts of the Clergy to govern Mankind, and to master the World? Was not this an Innovation with a Witness, a Propensity to Change, an actual and alarming Change? Were they not continually attempting to be what they were not, to have what they had not, still to be richer, still to be greater? Could there be a greater Change than from the Almsmen of the People to become Lords and Princes; from Poverty and Humility, to rise to Mitres and Diadems, and Dominion? And could such a Change, a Change so mighty and unnatural, be accomplished without turning the World upside down?

This is something more than *quieta movere*, something more than disturbing Things that were quiet. Did not *Laud* actually master and abolish the Laws of his Country, assert the Independency of the Clergy upon the civil Power, and terrify the Judges from issuing Prohibitions, as they were actually sworn to do? And did the Spirit of *Laud*, and this Passion in the Clergy of his Stamp, for Dominion, Independency, and princely Revenues, die with *Laud*? No: They have even improved upon his Scheme, and added, if possible, to his wild and enslaving Pretensions; and, as a Proof that they were the Pretensions of the Body, at least of the Majority, the Convocation could never be persuaded to censure them.

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In short, whoever doubts whether they (I mean all along, such of the Clergy as ambitiously pursued Power) have not been the Authors of Changes in the World, of great and calamitous Changes; whether they have not themselves changed and degenerated from their Patterns and Original, need only read History, and compare them with Christ and his Apostles, compare their Pretensions, Pomp, Luxury, and Possessions, with the Simplicity, Humility, Labour, and Disinterestedness of the primitive Christians.

The Truth, I doubt, is, when they make this Complaint, which is very usual with them, that *it is not safe to disturb Things which are established*, they only mean to discourage People from disturbing them in their favourite Pursuit after Power and Riches. Whatever is established by the New Testament and the Law, no Man that I know is for disturbing. But if they have Aims and Demands which are neither warranted by Christ nor the Constitution, it is right, and christian, and legal, to disturb, and even to defeat them.

Such high Claimers theretore of princely Rule and Opulence, (if there be any such) are the Men given to change; and it is always just to oppose Usurpation, to redress Grievances, remove Nuisances, and to attack Fraud, Avarice, and Nonsense.

It would be endless to deduce Particulars. But suppose any assuming Clergyman were so extravagant, and daring, and had so little Regard to Conscience and publick Tranquility, as to attempt to establish an Ecclesiastical Tribunal in our Colonies abroad, to the Terror and Affliction of our Brethren there, who were many of them first driven thither by the Oppression and Barbarity of such Courts here, especially in Archbishop *Laud's* Reign;

would not such an Attempt tend to a bold Innovation, and discover a busy, an arrogant and dangerous Spirit in such a Clergyman; and would he not be a good Subject and an honest Man, who set himself against such a lewd Attempt, and exposed its wicked Tendency?

Suppose any other Clergyman, such an Enemy to the civil Constitution, and to the Church of *England*, or such a Deserter from it, as to contend for the Independency of the Clergy for their Exemption from the civil Laws, nay for trying a Clergyman when he is to be tried, by a Jury of Clergymen; would not such a Man deserve severe Animadversion and Punishment; and would it not be honest and meritorious, to defend the Laws, and repulse this their Enemy, this Innovator, this Papist?

Suppose any other designing Priest, fond of promoting Superstition for the Ends of Authority, and Gain, should abuse the Credulity of the People, by pretending to convey Holiness into Ground and Stone Walls; as if Earth or Stone, or any thing inanimate, were susceptible of Sanctity, or their Quality to be altered by solemn Words; and all this without any Colour of Warrant from Law or Gospel, but in Opposition to the Spirit of both; would not such a crafty Priest be a false Guide, an Innovator, who relinquished Truth and the Protestant Religion, to promote Error, and to introduce Popery and Delusion? And would not he who resisted and confuted him, be a Friend to Society, a Defender of Truth, and a Foe to Fraud?

Suppose any Clergyman so bent upon exalting Churchmen and their Revenue, (for, the sure way of raising Them is to raise That) that he encouraged Designs and Schemes for transferring the whole Wealth of a Nation, by no slow Degrees, into the
Coffers

Coffers of the Clergy, would not such a Man be a Promoter of Change, of a universal and melancholy Change, and a declared Enemy to the Laity? And would it not be becoming Laymen, nay, incumbent on them, to be upon their Guard, to secure their Estates, and to preserve themselves and their Posterity from Poverty and Vassalage?

Suppose (once more) that any other Clergyman should have the Boldness to declare publickly, that a Brother Clergyman (a Bishop, for Example) still continued a true Bishop of the Church of Christ, even though he stood convicted of, and deprived for the highest and blackest Crimes, namely, Perjury, Disloyalty, Conspiracy, Treason and Rebellion; would not such a Declaration be highly insolent, scandalous, and punishable? To tell those who make Priests, that they cannot unmake them, nor one of them, would be to tell them, that Priests are above the Law and the Laity; that the Clergy have a Power and Designation which Laymen cannot take away, though the Laity and the Law actually create them, and confer upon them the only Designation that they can have, nay, confer their whole Office; nor does our Constitution particularly own, or know any Character in any Subject whatsoever, but what the Law alone bestows; and all the Clergy renounce upon Oath all Power whatsoever but what they derive from hence. An Act of Parliament would to-morrow effectually degrade all the Clergy in *Great Britain*; that is, reduce them all to Laymen, and create so many Priests immediately out of the Laity, without a Jot more Apparatus or Ceremony. Whoever is declared to be a Priest by any Society, is a Priest to them, and ceases to be one the moment they declare him none. The strange Notion of an indelible Character is arrant Nonsense and true Priestcraft,

craft, nay, the Ground-work of all Priestcraft, would it therefore be borne by an Assembly of Law-makers, so tender of their Liberties and of Protestantism as ours, to have this same indelible Character, this Root of Popery, maintained to their Faces? And would it not draw down their Indignation and Censures upon the bold Offender, I had almost said, Deceiver? Surely it would; and therefore

I mention these Instances as bare Possibilities, which can never be suffered in this free Protestant Country, but are common in Popish Countries, nay, are some of the reigning Tenets and Practices which support Popery. How zealous *Laurel* was in such Popish Practices and Tenets, I have not now Time to explain. Read his Life and Trial.

It is now high time to draw towards a Conclusion, by considering briefly what produced the Tragedy of this Day; a Consideration which will lead us to see how such Tragedies are to be prevented. The immediate Instruments of the King's Murder were violent Men, supported by a powerful Army, gained and commanded by a Usurper. This Power in the Army, and his Power over it, were the Effects of the Civil War, which was itself caused by the Misunderstanding and Struggle between the King and Parliament. What originally produced this Misunderstanding, which produced all the rest, is what we are principally to attend to. It is of much less Moment to know by what Hands the King fell, than to know how such Hands, or any Hands, came to be lifted up against him.

Now if we enquire into the first Cause, from which all the rest naturally followed, we shall find that the Violence of his Reign caused his violent End. It is not to be denied nor disguised, that from the very Beginning the Court aimed at arbitrary Power, openly

penly pursued it, and for fifteen Yeats together practised it, raising Money without Law, and against Law ; which was Robbery in those who enforced the Collection of it : Imprisoning Men, the best and greatest Men, without Law and against Law ; which was lawless Cruelty : Seizing the Lands and Estates of others, without Right and against Right ; which was flagrant Oppression and Violence : Assuming and exercising a Power to dispense with Laws, that is, a Power to make and annul Laws ; which was manifest Usurpation : And, in short, establishing an arbitrary and *Turkish* Authority over the Persons, and Rights and Fortunes of the People ; which was apparent and undeniable Tyranny.

Between Law and Violence, between Right and Tyranny, there is no Medium, no more than between Justice and Oppression. If King *Charles* had no Right to act thus, then his acting thus was Tyranny. If he had a Right, of what Force are Laws and Oaths, and where is our Constitution, the boasted Birthrights of *Englishmen*, and our ancient *Magna Charta* ? Why was his Son King *James* turned out ; why declared to have forfeited ? And I would ask the Admirers and Defenders of King *Charles I.* how they would have liked, how borne such Violences, such lawless Doings and Misrule in King *William* ; how in the late Reign ; how in this ? How would they have relished the Imprisonment of their Persons, Taxes laid on and exacted without Consent of Parliament, arbitrary and excessive Fines, their Estates seized, their Families impoverished or famishing ? Doubtless, no Men would have been louder in the Cry of Tyranny ; and very just and natural would have been such a Cry. No Sort of Men talk more warmly and frequently now in favour of Liberty and Law. How do they reconcile such
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Zeal and Professions with an Approbation of the Reign of King *Charles* I. which was one continued Series of Oppressions, had abolished Liberty and Law, and established universal Slavery? How would they have borne such terrible and tyrannical Usage? Very impatiently, I dare say. If they say otherwise, no reasonable Man will believe them; nor have they, upon Trial, ever shew'd much Passiveness of Spirit. Besides, if they justify the enslaving Measures then; they are not in earnest, or utterly inconsistent with themselves now, when they extol publick Liberty, and are for restraining Kings and their Ministers to Reason and Law.

What we have therefore to do on this Day, is not only to abhor the bloody Death of the King, and wicked Instruments of it, but to abhor also his evil and wicked Government for fifteen Years together; abhor the impious Principles which were then countenanced and prevailed, with the traiterous and ungodly Broachers and Promoters of such; and all the evil and arbitrary Counsellors then and since. And as we lament his latter End, let us detest the Beginning and Course of his Reign, which was as enormous and guilty, as his Catastrophe was mournful and barbarous. Was it crying Guilt thus to cut him off, as surely it was? Was it not also crying Guilt in the Crown, to abandon its Duty, to violate the Coronation Oath, to tread upon Law and Justice, to persecute Conscience, to rob and oppress the People, and from limited and lawful, to become lawless and arbitrary? And is it not equally reasonable, equally becoming us as *Englishmen* and Freemen, to commemorate and detest an Administration so pernicious and devouring, Measures so black and lawless? Is it not our Duty to take warning by them, and whenever we are threatned with them, to guard
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against them ; to watch every Principle of Slavery, and suppress it betimes ; to rejoyce that we live in happier Times, live in a free Government, and under the free Course of the Laws ; to pray for the Continuance of such an unvaluable Blessing, and be dutiful and assisting to that Good and Great Prince, who secures it to us, and claims nothing to himself, but what our Parliaments and the known Laws give him ?

Let us also learn a Lesson from the Behaviour of the Clergy at that Time ; and as they were then become wanton with extravagant Power, and used it very cruelly, in persecuting and oppressing their Fellow-Subjects ; let us take care for the future, that they who are set apart for the Purposes of Holiness, be not spoiled by the unnatural Possession and Exercise of worldly Business and Authority. Methinks it is profaning holy Men as they are, to embark them in secular Affairs, in the Commerce and Occupations of Laymen and Worldlings. As they miserably misled that unhappy Prince, King *Charles I.* it may serve as a Warning to other Princes from being led by them : And as they promoted and justified all unlawful and merciless Impositions upon the Laity ; as they contended that we were obliged to undergo all Servitude, to be tame Slaves to the meer Will of the Prince, and to obey it as our only Law ; we may from hence infer, that whenever they leave preaching the Gospel, and turn Courtiers and Politicians, they are out of their Element, and thence grow more wild and extravagant, as well as more wicked, and shameless and false, than other Men are.

It would never have entred into the Heart of a Layman, that the merciful God authorized Iniquity, Perjury, Perfidiousness and Tyranny ; and that

any miserable Wretch, who had all these crying Sins to answer for, was still sacred, and the Vicegerent of God ; or that God, who hates Wickedness, had forbid to resist, that is, to remedy the highest and most complicated Wickedness, nay damned all who had Sense and Virtue enough to do so.

These Positions were Monsters, formed by Clergymen out of their Sphere, and in high Fashion with *Laud* and his Associates. Was it very natural for the Laity to love and reverence such Clergymen, or these monstrous Positions? *The Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name ; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke unto them : They prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their hearts,* Jer. xiv. 14. Would it not therefore be prudent to keep all Clergymen from thus exposing themselves to Hate and Ridicule, and from promoting Mischief and Misery amongst the Laity? And is not this their Guilt infinitely more heinous and aggravated than that of the greatest private Sinner can be, as it affects and involves whole Nations, and is impiously covered with the Veil of Religion.

According to this Rule, and I think it a true Rule, the blackest Felon that ever suffered, was an Innocent in comparison of *Laud* and those of his Leaven; and had *Laud* consumed his Time in Debauchery, he could have done but small Hurt, compared to what he did as a Troubler and Seducer of the World. His Morals, as a private Man, did but heighen his Credit to do Mischief. With what an ill Grace must such Men rebuke private Vice and the Detail of Sins, they who vend and commit Sins by the Gross? This is indeed to swallow Camels, and strain at Gnats. Crimes are to be measured

measured by their Consequences ; and he who persecutes Men, he who misleads them and enslaves them, is the most guilty, the most monstrous and gigantick of all Criminals. Had *Laud* been a Parish Priest, and confined himself to the Duties of one ; or being a Bishop, had he done so ; he, who was a Man of Learning and Morals, might have been an innocent, nay, a useful Man. But as he and his Brethren would needs sway the Court and the Nation, they overturned both by the wickedest of all Means, even by an Excess of Tyranny and Oppression. It was they who raised, or at least increased the Storm, which at last ruined the Publick, and overwhelmed them in the publick Ruins.

These therefore are the Things and Persons now proper to be commemorated. From these we are to take our Marks and Warnings against a Relapse into the like evil Days and Calamities : And if there be any Curse still subsisting, derived from the King's Blood, it must justly lie upon them who approve the Men and Measures that first rendered him arbitrary and oppressive, and thence unpopular and distrusted. Here the Evil began, and from hence it was propagated like a Train. Had he always ruled as he afterwards too late proposed to rule, when Men were irritated and engaged, and full of Distrust, there had been no civil War, nor a conquering Army, nor an *Oliver*, nor consequently Royal Blood spilt. His Design and Promises to govern better afterwards (when he found that the Laws and Constitution would prevail) have been often urged and repeated, and are a Confession that he had governed ill before. Perhaps he meant to perform them. It is certain his Misrule had been sadly felt ; nor is there any Proof but his Word, that he intended to change : That Word had been

often and egregiously broken, especially in the Bill of Rights, which he solemnly promised to observe; yet he afterwards openly violated that just Bill.

How this Prince comes to be still so extremely popular amongst many of the Clergy, and consequently amongst many of the Laity influenced by them, is obvious enough. He was a very great Bigot to the Church, to Ceremonies and Shew in Religion, and to the Power and Pomp of Churchmen. These he cherished, and exalted, and obeyed; invested them with his own Power, and surrendered to them almost the whole Supremacy; and not only suffered them to enjoy the Use of it as a Present from him, but suffered them to seize it for themselves, and even to deny his Title to it. For such Court and Favour to them, for humouring them in their Persecution of the *Puritans*, for his glutting them with Power, and becoming their Creature rather than Sovereign and Head of the Church, they promoted and consecrated all the Excesses, Oppressions, and lawless Measures of his Reign, because all these Violences were exercised over the Laity; and the Churchmen were so far from feeling them, that they shared in his Domination, and acted the King too in their Place and Turn. This is the true Source of so much Merit and Praise; for this he is adored and fainted; for this he has been often compared to Jesus Christ in his sufferings; and for this the Guilt of murdering him has been represented as greater than that of crucifying our Blessed Saviour.

These their Panegyrics are, in Truth, partial and shameful in all respects, as well as impious and prophane; since thence they who utter them make it evident, that they care not how a Prince abuses his Trust, and oppresses his Lay Subjects, if he will but humour and aggrandize the Clergy; else why
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so much Incense and Applause bestowed upon a Prince who actually did so? This is partial and dishonourable: nor can there be a greater Insult upon the Laity, than to desire, or even hope, that they should join in such Praises and Applause. They who feel Oppression, cannot extol him who commits it, nor reckon him a good King, who uses them like Slaves.

No Sort of Men are more tender than the Clergy, when their Property, or Persons, or Privileges are touched, or more severe and resenting, or even more unforgiving towards such as meddle with either. I fear much, that had the Clergy been then used as the Laity were, treated like mean Slaves, worried with arbitrary Power and Impositions, and imprisoned upon mere Will and Command; this Day would not have been commemorated at all, or perhaps commemorated in a very different Manner. Why should not the Laity too have felt and resented Indignities done, and Violences committed against the Laity? Was it natural or possible to praise and honour the Author of such Violence and Indignities? When the Clergy were pleased and gratified, they might rejoice, though it be not generous to triumph when others suffer, nay, by their Sufferings. But the Laity could not express Joy, when they had just Cause to sorrow and mourn; or was it possible they should?

Such is the Difference between the Laity and the High Clergy, with regard to King *Charles* the First and Archbishop *Laud*. They adore the Archbishop, because he raised their Power beyond all Reason and Law, and was furious in the Exercise of such usurped Power; They adore the King for suffering such Encroachment, for being subservient to the Pride and Pursuits of Churchmen, and for dividing the
Sovereignty

Sovereignty with them. But as both the King and the Archbishop abused their Power, oppressed and persecuted the Laity, the Laity can commend neither; and have good Reason to pray, that they may never see such a King, nor such an Archbishop, any more for ever, and bless God for their present happy and different Situation. This is indeed just and copious Cause of Joy and Thanksgiving. King GEORGE reigns, the Laws prevail, Dissenters and private Conscience are protected, the Clergy have their Dues, and to all Men their Property is religiously secured. This is Protection, this is Liberty, this is Renown, and we are happy, and ought to be dutiful and content.

As to such Churchmen who will be contending, that the Clergy are a distinct Body from the Laity, with separate Interests and Views; they cannot be surprized to see, that the Laity improve the Hint and Example, and take care of themselves. It is very natural for the Laity to remember, that they alone give and continue to the Clergy what they have, and make them what they are. It is natural for them to be alarmed, when they hear the lawless Rule of King *Charles* the First applauded, his lawless and oppressive Measures justified or excused, and himself sainted and adored. This is a bold and awakening Insult, and a full Declaration, that if High-Churchmen can but floutish and domineer as they did then, they care not how much the Laity droop and decay; nay, approve and encourage the Bonds and Distresses of the Laity: And as a Proof how violently in earnest such High-Churchmen are in their Panegyricks upon that King and his Reign, they treat as Monsters and false Brethren, all impartial Clergymen, that refuse to falsify and daub as they do; insomuch that such reasonable
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and moderate Clergymen as confess the Truth, and love the Law and the Laity, and are willing to do Justice to both, are scorned, and derided, and reviled, as bad Churchmen, that is, as Friends to the Constitution, to Liberty, and Laymen, and such only as the Laity ought to esteem. Surely the Laity cannot but consider as open Foes, such Men as vindicate the Oppression and Bondage of the Laity: And that the Laity were thus used by that King, is Fact; and 'tis Fact also, that in using the Laity thus, he was abetted and prompted by all High-Churchmen then, and justified by all such ever since. Is it not full Time for us Laymen to see those Things, to resent such Insults, and to mark such Insulters? Is it not fair in us, is it not natural for us, to distinguish with all Countenance and Favour, those Clergymen alone, who contend for the Liberty and Rights of the Laity, and condemn all the mad and extravagant Claims, and all the selfish and violent Tenets of High-Churchmen?

As to the black Fact committed on this Day, all Men agree to condemn and abhor it, as utterly unlawful, violent, and full of Guilt. But this is not enough for High-Churchmen, unless all the Oppressions and Excesses, all the wicked Counsellors and Instruments of that Reign be likewise excused, it not extolled. This is what they themselves have ever confidently undertaken to do, in the Face of the most glaring Truth and Facts. How we Laymen ought to consider this Day and these Men, I have already said. In Truth, had there not been such Men then, there had not been such a Day now. By them the unhappy King, of himself very vain of unbounded Power, and fond of setting Royalty above Right, was abetted and encouraged to pursue such Measures as ended in much Misery
to

to him, as well as to his People : By such Men his Son was tempted to try the same dangerous and guilty Experiment ; and by trusting to such Men, to their unnatural Whims and deadly Flattery, he lost his Crown and his Honour, lived an Exile, and died a Beggar.

From hence, and from all that has been said, let us learn a Lesson proper for this Day, and for every Day ; that is, let us take great Care, according to the Words and Warning of my Text, *That the Hypocrite reign not, lest the People be ensnared.*

P. S. The Author of this Sermon finding his Matter increase, and his Sermon already too long, reserves what he has further to say, to a *Supplement*, which he will soon publish, addressed to a very important and most solemn Churchman.



A
SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
SERMON

Preached at
LINCOLN'S - INN,

On JANUARY 30, 1732.

By a LAYMAN.

Addressed to a very Important and most
Solemn CHURCHMAN, Solicitor-Gener-
al for Causes Ecclesiastical.

The FOURTH EDITION.



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Printed for J. PEELE, at *Locke's-Head* in *Amen-
Corner*, near *Pater-noster-Row*.

MDCCLXXXIII.

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TO THE

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DELIVERED AT

A L L O C A T I O N

ON THE

17th

And to a very important and
interesting subject, the
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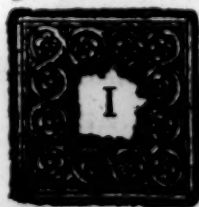
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17th



A
SUPPLEMENT
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SERMON preached at *Lincoln's Inn*,
On JANUARY 30. 1732.

*Addressed to a very Important and most Solemn
CHURCHMAN, Solicitor-General for Causes Ecclesiastical.*

HOLY FATHER,



APPLY to you without Form or Compliment, about certain Doubts and Difficulties, which, I am told, no Man is so fit as you to answer and resolve. Your great Abilities (I do not say in Divinity ; for that is a very different thing, but) in Canons, Distinctions, Discipline, and all Parts of Church-Attorneyship, are allowed by all Men: Even such as dispute His Majesty's Title to the Crown, allow you that of an *Excellent Churchman*. As I aim at no Preferment, and therefore bring no Incense, I was willing to shew you, that it was possible to dedicate to you without Worship or Daubing.

ing. Besides, I take this my Address to you to be exceeding suitable ; since you, who have made Church-Power and Church-Revenues so much your Care and Pursuit, are a proper Judge, whether what I have said of the evil Influence of Church-Power and Revenue over Religion and human Society be true.

You, who must have traced ecclesiastical Grandeur up to its first Sources, and marked its Progress, Improvements and Variations, can readily explain how it arose, how it was used, whether righteously acquired, whether honestly employed, how it affected the Laity, how the Clergy ; what Tendency it had to advance Religion and civil Happiness, what Success in mending the Morals, and increasing the Humility and pious Labours of Churchmen.

You, who are known to contend for ecclesiastical Authority, can demonstrate what that Authority is, whence derived, by whom and over whom to be exercised, how to be reconciled to Conscience, Christianity and common Sense ; whether it can produce or preserve Conviction, and make Men Christians, or continue them so ; and whether such Authority be consistent with Reason and Grace, or whether Reason and Grace do not exclude and destroy such Authority ; as also how such Authority consists with the Oaths of the Clergy, who swear to renounce all Claim to any Power of any Kind or Sort whatsoever, but what they derive from the Crown.

Pray tell us, what any Clergyman can do, which any Layman, who can read and write, cannot do, and may not do, if the Law appoint him ? Is it not the Law alone, which has the Power to qualify, and can alone disqualify ? Whoever maintains the contrary, incurs a *Præmunire*. Have the Clergy
any

any Revelation but the Bible? And is not such Revelation made to the Laity, and indeed, without Restriction, to all Men? And are not the necessary and practical Parts of the Bible very plain and intelligible to Laymen? And have Clergymen ever agreed about explaining the dark Parts? I wish none had ever endeavoured to darken the clearest Parts of it, or to hide and suppress the Whole. If the Assertion of any Powers invisible in Men, that is, Powers which have no visible Effect, be other than a Dream and Forgery; you will do well to shew what they are, whence they are, and how they effect their strange and invisible Feats. To read Prayers, and Scriptures, and Sermons; to give Bread and Wine, and say words over them; to sprinkle Water upon Babes; to declare what offends God and his Law; and to wear Gowns and Bands, and broad Hats, are Exploits which may be performed by very mean Men amongst the Laity: And to judge and declare who are qualified to perform them, is a Task as easy as the rest. Will you say, that such Functions are less effectual in a Layman, or more so in a Clergyman? Who told you so? It may be so said in the old popish Canons or Schoolmen, and in the extravagant Writings of some Ecclesiasticks; but no where in the New Testament.

Will you say, that God blesses any pious Office done by a Layman, less than when done by a Clergyman? And what Idea would this give us of God? Will you say that a little Infant, free from Offence, and incapable of offending, is therefore debarred from Heaven, or any Part of Bliss, because he dies unbaptized, or was baptized by a Layman? And what Idea does such a Tenet exhibit of the Divine Being? Or, if a Layman can do this sacred Office effectually, Why not more Offices, and all?

You know what impious Notions many Clergy men have broached and held about Baptism, as if no Salvation could be had without it, and no Baptism without them. This is one of the monstrous, I had almost said blasphemous, Whims resulting from the other monstrous Whim, that of an indelible Character; which is a Whim so very strange and inconceivable, that where 'tis once believed and established, 'tis no wonder to see the wildest Extravagances, and even Impossibilities and Contradictions maintained and believed in consequence of it: Since from any senseless Position whatsoever, endless Deductions of Nonsense can be drawn, and may seem naturally to follow; and one Contradiction shall produce, and illustrate, and prove an hundred Contradictions. Thus, if either the indelible Character, or apostolic Succession, or Infallibility, or Power of binding and loosing be but allowed; from these, or any of these, all the most fraudulent, fanatical, and engrossing Claims of the Pope and Popish Clergy, may be deduced and established.

May not a Layman perform all spiritual Offices, where there are no Clergymen? Is a Chapter of the Bible less edifying when read by a Layman, than when read by a Clergyman? I ask this the rather, because I knew a Tradesman, who read Prayers and the Scripture on *Sundays* at a foreign Fishery, where there were no Clergy, and he was therefore thought proper to be put into Deacon's Orders, as if he had been thence the better qualified for reading Prayers and the Bible. Was this Employment in him either more sacred or more effectual afterwards than before? If it was, What an Idea does this too give us of the Great God? Or have the Clergy succeeded better than Laymen, in appointing one another? Father *Paul* says, and History says, the contrary.

That

That excellent Writer lays it down as Fact, That the best Bishops were made by Princes ; and that whenever the Clergy had the conducting of their own Elections, infinite Disorders ensued. So little, or so ill Effect had their indelible Character in making and appointing one another. Was not this Pretence to an indelible Character, one great Source of Popery and the Inquisition, and of all the Terrors, Frauds, and Deformities of Priestcraft ? And was it not natural for *Indelibility* to produce *Infallibility* ; and is there more to be said for the former than for the latter ?

I should also be glad to hear you discourse rationally about Pluralities and Commendams, and shew their Consistency with the Duty and Call of such Churchmen as possess them. As they who do not reside, do not labour ; Should such as do no Work, receive no Pay ? *Beneficium propter officium*, was the Stile of old ; and Benefices were given for spiritual Purposes. Indeed the temporal Part was only considered in a second and circumstantial Sense. “ Afterwards, says Father Paul, the spiritual Part was forgot, and nothing but the Profits regarded.” This was lamentable Corruption ; yet such as dealt in it, and, in Truth, in little else, called themselves holy Men ; that is, the most fordid, the most corrupt and covetous, such as made Traffic of Churches and Souls, assumed to be holy, and claimed an indelible Character.

In the primitive Times, it was scandalous and forbidden, that any Clerk should quit his Cure, though ever so poor, for another though richer. It was alledged and ordained, That if any Bishop despised his Bishoprick for being small, and sought after a greater Diocese and larger Rents, he should not only never obtain the greater Bishoprick, which
through

through Avarice he desired, but even lose that which he already possessed, and through Pride despised. What can be a more sacred Trust than a Trust of Souls, what so important? Does it not require all the Time and Attention that mortal Men can bestow? And how is such Duty to be reconciled to Pluralities and Commendams, how to Non-residence? The holding of more Churches than one, was adjudged by some principal Fathers of the primitive Church, to be spiritual Polygamy: And I question whether a Plurality of Wives, though Felony by our Law, be so sinful, or can have such bad Consequences, when we consider that some Pastors who are greatly endowed, hardly ever see the Faces of their Flocks: Some have several Flocks, and feed none of them, but take vast Pay for nothing, and employ Underlings for poor Wages. If these Underlings and these poor Wages are sufficient, as by their Practice these great Clergymen shew that they think, Is it not natural for the Laity to desire to make as good Bargains as the Clergy? Is it not natural to conclude, that since the highest and most solemn Offices may be performed at a small Expence, as is manifest from the hiring of Curates, it would be but Prudence to save such high Revenues given to such as do nothing but hire others?

How a spiritual Trust once conferred, could be afterwards delegated to another, the Trust itself transferred, and the Advantages reserved, I could never yet account either from the Gospel of Christ, or from the natural Ideas of Morality. Yet are not great Revenues daily desired upon the Erection of any new Church, though he who is to enjoy them, often does no Duty at all, but leaves it to a cheap Hireling? And is not that Service for which the
Parish

Parish is to pay many Hundreds a Year, often performed for thirty or forty Pounds a Year? Some civil Trusts may be thus executed by Deputies; but is this a Way to deal (I had almost said to traffic) with Souls, and to be answerable for them? Is this spiritual Fathership? Is this apostolic, or are those who do so still Successors to the Apostles? I should be glad to hear you explain this, and shew whether any Man who professed to turn Religion into a Trade, could act in a different or more lucrative Manner.

I have likewise some Doubts to propose to you about Excommunication, which, I fear, is little understood, and greatly abused. If it were originally no more than turning a Man out of a Society with the Laws of which he would not comply, as was really the Case, and as is daily done in common Clubs, and in Juntoes of Traders; is it not notorious Abuse, as well as extremely daring and wicked, to construe it into the dismal Delivery of a Soul to the Devil and Damnation? Will you say, dare you venture to say, that a Person excommunicated is in the Power of Satan, and that such a Sentence sends him thither? If it do, they who pronounce it must be the most wicked and impious of all Men; nor can any earthly Consideration excuse them. Is it for Tithe? Then is their Tithe dearer to them than an immortal Soul. Is it not for Tithe, but for Contumacy, in not appearing and owning their Jurisdiction? Then is their Pride and Jurisdiction of more Weight with them than the Salvation of Men? But if Excommunication have no such Effect, why is not the Bugbear removed, by explaining it into a reasonable and a Christian Meaning? Or rather, why is a Practice which cannot be of God, suffered to continue, why
impiously

impiously continued in his Name? And can any Man who defends Excommunication, argue against Purgatory? The temporal Effects of it are sufficiently heavy and hard; so hard, that nothing under the highest Consideration can justify the Man who brings them down upon another. Its spiritual Operation, were it true, would indeed be shocking and frightful. But who would affront the Divine Being, by believing that he, the Author of Mercy and Wisdom, could contradict his own Nature to gratify the Peevishness and Cruelty of weak and revengeful Men?

They who are apt to bring the Charge of Blasphemy against others, often upon very small, sometimes upon very ludicrous Occasions, would do well to consider, Whether there can be higher Blasphemy, than to assert a Power in Man of directing or obliging the Almighty; a Privilege to apply the Might and Terrors of Omnipotence to the Perdition of Men? I presume you will not say of Excommunication, what I am told the reverend Dr. Fiddes says of Popish Indulgences in his History of Henry VIII. *That they were a Treasure which the Church had been long in Possession of.*

I leave it therefore to your Judgment, whether this spiritual Engine be for the Service of Christ's Church, or for the Credit of such as call themselves his Ministers; and whether what is shocking to Sense and Humanity, can ever be true in Religion, or a Part of Religion, I mean of the Christian Religion.

I would also humbly propose it to your serious Thoughts, whether amongst your publick Admonitions and Reproofs to the Laity, you might not think it advisable, and find cause, to let your Brethren the Clergy have their Share. Are there no

pre-

prevailing Mistakes or Disorders amongst them? No strange and unreasonable Claims maintained by them who are called Orthodox, no extravagant Writings published, no wild and passionate Sermons preached? Is Orthodoxy alone never preferred by you to eminent Piety and Sufficiency, under suspicion of Heterodoxy? Is the Man who asserts *Christ's Kingdom not to be of this World*, as dear to you as they who would found worldly Power upon the Gospel of Christ, and erect a Priesthood with Power, in virtue of being Successors to him, who had no Power, and disclaimed all Power? Are you equally tender to the Failings of Laymen, as to those of Clergymen? Or is it your Opinion and Policy, that the same should be concealed and dissembled, at least not exposed to the profane Laity?

I remember an Instance, where I thought the Partiality of a more than Reverend Clergyman too apparent: For whilst *He* manifested much just Zeal for capitally punishing certain beastly Offenders against the Law, and Purity and Design of Nature, I mean *Lay-Offenders*; all *His* Zeal cooled, at least produced small Effect, in the Case of a *Brother Doctor* found to have been flagrantly guilty of that Abomination for many Years, and often in a very sacred Place: Yet this Doctor escaped with an Admonition and a small Fine, in a Court too where that more than Reverend Clergyman was thought to have no small Influence. And I suppose, that that unnatural Sinner was still esteem'd to be *a true Minister of the Church*, since he is still left to act as such, and to receive the Stipend of such, doubtless to the great Edification of Souls, and Credit of Orthodoxy and of Episcopal Courts. So far was that more than Reverend Clergyman from applying, on this Occasion, to the secular Arm,

though *He* had just before praised it for finding out, and pouring down its deadly Terrors upon such bestial Criminals.

A little of your publick and private Advice to your Brethren, recommending to them more Meekness and Moderation, with a Behaviour more complaisant and less litigious towards their People, would be of use. I hear that you give them very different Advice, even to be as troublesome and vexatious to their People as they can, by departing from settled Customs, and starting new Demands. Such Advice is by no means proper for them, nor do they want it. It is certain, they would do well not to render themselves daily more unpopular and obnoxious by Haughtiness, Greediness, and Law-Suits. My Lord *Clarendon* owns, that the Clergy of that Time, supported and animated by Archbishop *Laud*, grew assuming, and lived not well with their Neighbours in the Country. This bred ill Blood towards them; and when they were pulled down, it was remembered how insolently they had behaved when they were uppermost: Hence the easier way was made for the sower and gloomy Set who succeeded them.

The present daily Increase of their Property, their Monopoly of Advowsons, their breaking all the Modus's, their frequent Success in troublesome Suits, and their apparent Fondness of such, help to sooth and exalt them: But as all this is seen, and felt, and regretted by the whole Body of the Laity, it may bring a Storm strong enough to overthrow all these Advantages. Perhaps too Abuses not now thought of, will be then sought, and found, and severely redressed.

This Thought is really painful to me; in the Sincerity of my Heart I speak it: For I dread all
great

great Changes, and all Approaches towards such. I would therefore have the Clergy provoke none. They must not, in an enlightned Age, and an Age of Liberty, think themselves a Match for the Laity, were the Laity once tempted to exert themselves. Perhaps they were never less a Match for the Laity than now. Times and Countries have been, when the People were so blind, or so awed, that though Religion was turned publickly into Power and Gain, they could not perceive it, or durst not censure it. Such Times are no longer, nor is *England* that Country now.

Modesty and Meekness, in the Language and Writings of the Clergy, is likewise always commendable, and no more than good Policy. The fierce and provoking Style is not the Christian, nor the gaining Style; and Pride and Passion are ill Proofs of Religion. But most unpardonable is the Practice of such, who, when a Man differs from them in any ecclesiastical Point, though utterly foreign from Religion, yet charge him confidently with Infidelity, let his Style be ever so Christian, and his Professions for Christianity ever so strong. This Practice, follow it who will, is unchristian and malicious, but shamefully common. I therefore like Dr. *Conybear's* late Book for its Temper and Civility; nor, as far as I have looked into it, could I find any Strokes of Pertness or Anger; two Ingredients very common in the Works of Ecclesiasticks. Another Doctor, of some Name in Controversy, and an Advocate and an Answerer on the same Side, hath shewn such wild Transports, such Virulence and Scurrility, that it is not to be determined, whether the Madman, the Scold, or the Executioner, predominate most in his Composition.

I have heard that even you, holy Father, with all your Affectation of Smoothness and Temper, have treated Gentlemen with very coarse Names, for no other Reason, than that they differed from you about Matters of Power and Speculation. This was not wise : (That it was ill-bred, I do not wonder) and it might tempt, and perhaps warrant Gentlemen so used to treat you very roughly. A *Monster* is by no Means a proper Name for Gentlemen, some of them as well esteemed and as generally beloved as you are. I could paint such Usage in Colours which you would not like. I could likewise draw such a Character of some who are dead (for upon the Dead and Living, *Monster* and *Infidel* are Names which, it seems, you freely throw :) I say, I could represent some of them in such Lights, such true Lights, as would equal, and, I doubt, much foil the best that you can be shewn in. I could represent their amiable and benevolent Minds, their great Knowledge, their elevated Capacity, their universal Integrity and Love of Mankind, their Scorn of Hypocrisy and little Party-Views, of narrow Spirits, and of every mean and selfish Artifice.

But I want Room and Time to enter fully into the pleasing and mournful Theme. Neither do I think myself qualified to make equal Returns to coarse Usage. Let me just say, That the Words *Infidel* and *Infidelity*, as they are grown Terms of Anger and Reproach, can seldom become the Mouth or Pen of a candid or well-bred Man. Pardon me, when I assert, that every Man living has as good a Right to differ in Opinion from you, as you have to differ from him : If you think or maintain the contrary, you have a *monstrous* Share of Pride or Folly ; nor do I know a greater *Monster* amongst

amongst Men, than the solemn Hypocrite, who pretends to derive Pomp, and Power, and worldly Wealth out of the New Testament; who would confine the uncontrollable Freedom of the Soul by human Articles and Restrictions, and treats such as follow Reason and not him, with Spite and saucy Language.--- But I check myself; nor will I finish my Picture of this sort of *Monster*, lest the Likeness might be too glaring. I therefore return to advise you; and here let me assure you, that it is repugnant to all Candor, and unworthy your Character, to descend to mean Solicitations, and to teaze for Prosecutions against such Writings and Authors as thwart you. In Matters of Religion, no Book which can be answered, ought to be prosecuted; nor can you find any Honour in such Prosecution, no more than you can shew Charity in procuring it. A Minister of Truth begging the Aid of worldly Penalties in a Dispute about Spirituals, makes a poor, a strange, and a scandalous Figure. Such Conduct seems only to suit with worldly Designs, and to bewray, if not the Weakness of his Cause, at least his Insufficiency to defend it.

To oppose Force to just Reasoning, is unjust; to answer false Reasoning by Force, is foolish and needless. A bad Cause is 'quickly refuted, a good Cause easily defended; and Christianity, though it can bear much Severity and Violence, can never exercise nor warrant any: nor was the Christian Name ever more abused, than when prostituted to justify Rigor and Violence: And Punishment for Opinion might indeed be of *ecclesiastical*, but could never be of *christian* Pedigree.

You have, Holy Father, the Reputation of a strong Churchman; and Charity obliges me to believe

Beve you a Christian ; (for the Christian Spirit is not suspicious no more than revengeful) Be the Church-man still ; but let the Christian predominate, and then I dare say you will never solicit another Prosecution. The Clergy, to a Man, believe your Heart bent upon Church Power, and upon all the Means that lead to it. You have also thoroughly convinced the Laity in this Point, though 'tis said that you had rather they were not so convinced, and are wont to speak to them in a Stile not at all favouring of a Passion for sacerdotal Rule: Which Behaviour in you is only artful, and must not to be called *false* or *insincere*, since Insincerity is not a christian Virtue. But such Art, when found out, loses its Use: You would therefore do well to drop such of your grand Views as bode not well towards the Laity; for they are upon their Guard, and I would not have you put them upon trying their Strength and Mettle.

Rather take a contrary and securer Method ; surrender your weak Passes, give up indefensible Points, claim nothing but what the Constitution gives you, affect not to be more than what the Law makes you ; separate not yourself and Brethren too much from the Laity ; for woe be to you, if ever they should separate themselves from you. If upon Examination you find any Millstones about the Neck of your Cause, any excessive Absurdities, any contradictory Tenets, any terrible Claims, any hurtful or oppressive Practices, any unpopular Principles or Rules, such as square not with the general Interests and Sentiments of the Laity: Begin, O holy Father, to throw off such Millstones into the Sea, lest they pull you thither after them. 'Tis better to quit, with a good Grace, even the most favourite

rite Point or Mistake, than be forced to quit it with Shame and the Imputation of Obstinacy.

What those Millstones, those indefensible Points are, I pretend not farther to explain to one of your Sagacity. Some of them I have named. In your Researches for others, perhaps it may merit some Inquiry, or perhaps very little, whether Ecclesiastical Courts be any considerable Support or Credit to the Cause of the Church (for I think Religion has little to do with them). I will venture to say, that Excommunication is a Matter of very serious, of very melancholy Attention to every Man who believes in God, and has a Regard for the Bodies or Souls of Men. Are there not moreover some Things in the Oath given to Churchwardens, hard, if not impossible to be kept; either obliging them to be perjured themselves, or uneasy and even intolerable to their Neighbours? And are there not certain odd and contradictory Oaths in the Universities, which are a Scandal to Religion, and a Contradiction to Learning, and even to Morality? And does it not become the Zeal of any Christian Pastor, to remove all such Scandals? And would they not be removed, if Religion were as much considered as ecclesiastical Policy and Power?

I would likewise humbly propose, whether a true, a good, or even a christian use has been generally made of the 30th of *January*? whether those of your Order have generally acted upon it like Ambassadors of *Truth* and *Peace*? And whether either the civil Government of King *Charles I.* or the ecclesiastical Government of Archbishop *Laud*, be proper Patterns to be followed in a free and a christian Country? I think that, in my Sermon, I have amply shewn that they are not. Let me add here one remarkable Passage out of *Rushworth*: "About
this

this time (in the Year 1636) the new Statutes for
 “ the University of *Oxford*, were finished and pub-
 “ lished in Convocation. The Preface disparaged
 “ King *Edward* the VIth’s Times and Govern-
 “ ment, declaring, the Discipline of the University
 “ was discomposed by that King’s Injunctions,
 “ and that it did revive and flourish again in Queen
 “ *Mary’s* Days under Cardinal *Pool*; when by
 “ the much to be desired Felicity of those Times, an
 “ inbred Candor supplied the Defect of Statutes.”

Was there ever in any Declaration, even from
 the *Vatican*, more of the Popish Stile and Spirit?
 The Times and Government of that excellent Prince,
 that pious Protestant and Reformer, *Edward* the
 VIth, are traduced by an *English* Convocation, for
 his having unsettled the old Popish Discipline, and
 reduced it nearer to the Genius of the Reformation.
 The Days of that Popish Bigot, Queen *Mary*, are
 wished for; that is, the Days when Popery, with
 all its Power and Fury, was restored, the Protestant
 Religion abolished, and Protestants openly and mer-
 cilessly burned; a *Romish* Cardinal is mentioned
 and extolled for his Church Government, and Po-
 pish Superstition, and Bigotry, and blind Obedience,
 are represented as *inbred Candor*.

Say, Holy Father, were the Members of this Con-
 vocation Protestants, or was *Laud*, who governed
 them, a Protestant? And was it any Hardship or
 Wonder, that he and they were represented as Pa-
 pists? And what was that King who submitted to,
 and assisted them in all their violent and popish Pur-
 suits? Nay, was their Advocate against himself;
 when instead of asserting his Prerogative and Supre-
 macy, and supporting the University of *Cambridge*,
 who opposed *Laud’s* Visitation of them, as what he
 could not underrake without the King’s Commis-
 sion

tion; he, even the King in Person, argued for this Usurpation, for this Invasion of his Royalty, for this Seizure and Impropriation of his Power and Dignity?

Strange Condescension and Folly in him, as well as Inconsistency of Character! fond of exalting the Prerogative over the Belly of Law and Justice where the Laity were concerned, yet poorly laying it under the Feet of the Clergy, where the Protection of his People, and his own Duty and Honour, called upon him to preserve and exert it. I shall here add a further Catalogue of his Oppressions, as the same are summed up in a lively manner by the late excellent Mr. *Trenchard*, in his *Short History of Standing Armies in England*.

--- " This King's whole Reign was one continued Act against the Laws: He dissolved his first
 " Parliament for presuming to enquire into his Father's Death, though he lost a great Sum of Money by it, which they had voted him: He entered at the same Time into a War with France
 " and Spain, upon the private Piques of *Buckingham*, who managed them to the eternal Dishon-
 " our and Reproach of the *English* Nation; witness the ridiculous Enterprizes upon *Cadiz* and
 " the Isle of *Rhee*: He delivered *Pennington's* Fleet into the *French* Hands, betrayed the poor
 " *Rochellers*, and suffered the Protestant Interest in *France* to be quite extirpated: He raised Loans,
 " Excises, Coat and Conduct-Money, Tunnage and Poundage, Knighthood and Ship-Money,
 " without Authority of Parliament; imposed new Oaths upon the Subjects to discover the Value
 " of their Estates; imprisoned great Numbers of the most considerable Gentry and Merchants
 " for not paying his arbitrary Taxes; some he sent beyond Sea, and the poorer sort he press'd for Sol-
 " diers

“ diers : He kept Soldiers on free Quarter, and exe-
 “ cuted martial Law upon them : He granted Mo-
 “ nopolies without Number, and broke the Bounds
 “ of the Forests : He erected arbitrary Courts,
 “ and enlarged others ; as the High Commission
 “ Court, Star-Chamber, Court of Honour, Court
 “ of Requests, &c. and unspeakable Oppressions were
 “ committed in them, even to Men of the first Qua-
 “ lity. He commanded the Earl of *Bristol* and Bi-
 “ shop of *Lincoln* not to come to Parliament ; com-
 “ mitted and prosecuted a great many of the most
 “ eminent Members of the House of Commons for
 “ what they did there, some for no Cause at all ;
 “ and would not let them have the Benefit of *Ha-*
 “ *beas Corpus* : Suspended and confined Archbishop
 “ *Abbot*, because he would not license a Sermon that
 “ asserted despotick Power, whatever other Cause was
 “ pretended : He suspended the Bishop of *Gloucester*
 “ for refusing to swear never to consent to alter the
 “ Government of the Church : Supported all his
 “ arbitrary Ministers against the Parliament, telling
 “ them, he *wondered at the foolish Impudence of any*
 “ *one to think he would part with the meanest of his*
 “ *Servants upon their Account* : And indeed in his
 “ Speeches, or rather Menaces, he treated them
 “ like his Footmen, calling them *undutiful, seditious,*
 “ *and Vipers* : He brought unheard-of Innovations
 “ into the Church, preferred Men of arbitrary Prin-
 “ ciples, and inclineable to Popery, especially those
 “ *Firebrands Laud, Montague, and Manwaring* ;
 “ one of whom had been complained of in Parlia-
 “ ment, another impeached for advancing Popery,
 “ and the Third condemned in the House of Lords ;
 “ He dispensed with the Laws against Papists, and
 “ both encouraged and preferred them : He called
 “ no Parliament for twelve Years together, and in
 “ that

“ that time governed as arbitrarily as the *Grand Signior*: He abbetted the *Irish* Massacre, as appears
 “ by their producing a Commission under the Great-
 “ Seal of *Scotland*; by the Letter of *Charles* the
 “ Second in favour of the Marquis of *Antrim*; by
 “ his stopping the Succours that the Parliament sent
 “ to reduce *Ireland*, six Months under the Walls of
 “ *Chester*; by his entering into a Treaty with the
 “ Rebels, after he had engaged his Faith to the
 “ Parliament to the contrary; and bringing over
 “ many Thousands of them to fight against his Peo-
 “ ple.-----

“ Upon Pretence of the *Spanish* and *French* War,
 “ he raised many thousand Men, who lived up-
 “ on free Quarter, and robbed and destroyed
 “ where ever they came: But being unsuccessful in
 “ his Wars abroad, and pressed by the Clamours
 “ of the People at home, he was forced to disband
 “ them. In 1627 he sent over 30000 *l.* to *Holland*,
 “ to raise 3000 *German* Horse to force his arbitrary
 “ Taxes; but this Matter taking Wind, and being
 “ examined by the Parliament, Orders were sent
 “ to countermand them. In the 15th Year of his
 “ Reign he gave a Commission to *Strafford* to raise
 “ 8000 *Irish* to be brought into *England*: But be-
 “ fore they could get hither, the *Scots* were in
 “ Arms for the like Oppressions, and marched into
 “ *Northumberland*; which forcing him to call a
 “ Parliament, prevented that Design, and so that
 “ Army was disbanded. Soon after he raised an
 “ Army in *England* to oppose the *Scots*, and tam-
 “ pered with them to march to *London*, and dissolve
 “ the Parliament: But this Army being composed,
 “ for the most part, of the Militia; and the Matter
 “ being communicated to the House, who immedi-
 “ ately fell on the Officers that were Members as

“*Asbburnham, Wilmot, Pollard, &c.* the Design
“ came to nothing.”

I could quote much more from the same Pamphlet ; but, to use the Words of the Author, *it is endless to enumerate all the Oppressions of his Reign*. What think you, holy Father, of the Panegyricks made upon such a Prince for almost a Century past by the Clergy, or of the Clergy who made and make those Panegyricks either upon him or *Laud*?

I think nothing is more manifest, than that in those Days there was a settled Purpose, both in the Court and in the Churchmen, to overturn the Reformation and the Constitution ; nay, each of these Designs was well nigh accomplished ; and it was already the Fashion, not only to treat such who adhered to the Law against the Violence and mad Maxims which then prevailed, as Traitors ; but the Name of *Traitors* and *Rebels* were, by *Laud's* Followers and Creatures, bestowed upon our first pious Reformers ; and with the Reformation itself great Faults were found, especially with those Parts of it which retrenched the Wealth and Power of the Clergy : Popish Ceremonies were daily restored ; with the Bowings, Grimaces, Pictures, and Forms usually seen at Popish Chapples and Masses ; and all Men were persecuted, many ruined, who opposed such scandalous Innovations, tending only to advance Superstition and Priestcraft.

Why many of these Innovations, and such Defection from the Reformation still continue, I leave you, holy Father, to consider and explain. I desire this of you the rather, for that I am told, that you often hold up your Hands, and wonder how Clergymen can by their Writings contradict what they have once subscribed.

That

That you should wonder at this, is indeed Matter of Wonder. Is there one of you that conforms to the genuine Sense, or even to the Words of the Articles? Are not these Articles *Calvinistical*? Were they not composed by *Calvinists*? And are you not now, and have been long, all *Arminians*? And do you not preach and write against the Presbyterians who defend *Predestination*, which is one of your own *Articles*?

Will you say that Articles, will you say that Oaths are to be taken in a Sense different from the Words, different from the Meaning of those who compose them? If you do, then you maintain that *Papists*, nay, that *Mahometans* may subscribe our Protestant Articles, and be still *Mahometans* and *Papists*; and that *Jacobites* may take the State Oaths, and be still *Jacobites*.

What Subscriptions or Declarations, or indeed what other Ties can bind Men, who, after they have solemnly testified that they are called by the *Holy Ghost*, yet subscribe the direct contrary to what they believe, subscribe the Doctrines of *Calvin*, yet remain Antagonists to *Calvin*? Is this Practice, this solemn Assertion of a Falshood, for the Honour of Religion, or of Churchmen? Or, is it not the direct Method to harden Men against Truth and Conscience, and to turn holy Things into Contempt? Yet you still go on to subscribe those Articles, still to disbelieve and contradict them, yet never attempt to alter or abolish them. Does such contradictory Doings shew any Regard for Religion, or for Truth or Decency?

After such Departure from the doctrinal Articles, you cannot with any Decency blame such who differ from your Notions about Church Power and Discipline. The Church and Constitution of *England*

land neither owns nor knows any Clergymen but such who derive all their Power from the Law : All others are Pretenders, or rather Deserters, and would be Usurpers, if the Laity and the Law would let them. Such Clergymen therefore as disclaim all Power, and Pomp, and Revenue whatsoever, but what the Law and Laymen give them, are the only Clergy that Laymen ought to reverence or indeed acknowledge. All the rest, who assert a prior Right, and have superior Demands, should be considered as lurking Enemies or bold Invaders, and carefully watched and resisted. Nor is it small Want of Modesty in you, and such as are like you, to censure such Clergymen as adhere to the Law and Constitution, whilst you assume to yourselves a Latitude to dissent from your very Articles, with spiritual Characters and Powers, superior to the Law, and independent upon it.

Can any Layman, who has common Sense, or common Notions of Truth and Liberty, bear with Patience a Spirit so arrogant, with such a saucy inconsistent Behaviour : Far different, and indeed quite opposite was the Spirit of the Reformation. Nor is Reverence due to any Clergyman in whom this last Spirit is not found. Neither are they at all Clergymen of the Church of *England*, in whom the contrary Spirit is found. Can any Layman be at a Moment's Loss to know, what Sort of Clergymen are most useful and amiable to him ; they who set up to command him, and consequently to put Chains upon him ; or they who claim only the Liberty to instruct and advise him, and therefore leave him still as free as he was before ?

Be pleased also, holy Father, to instruct me in the Nature and Efficacy of *Absolution*. Is it authoritative, and proceeding from the Power of the Priest only ? Or is it conditional, and only a
 Decla-

Declaration that God will accept, or hath accepted sincere Repentance? If God pardons upon Repentance, what Force is in Absolution, or what Use, further than to ease poor Sinners, by assuring them, that if they have repented, God has forgiven them? If this be all, any Man, even the Sinner himself, may pronounce such a Declaration upon himself. Or does God stay to forgive, even after Repentance, till the Priest pronounces Absolution? If so, has not the Priest a greater Share than God in saving Men; nay, a superior Power, if his Part comes first, and his Absolution takes place of, and introduces God's Pardon? If Repentance suffices without a Priest or Absolution, then what signifies either upon such Occasion, further than for a Declaration of Comfort? And without Repentance, what avails Absolution? Will you say that it avails? Or has our blessed Saviour ever said so? You must needs know what extravagant Positions, and what impious Claims of Power, have been confidently derived from this Privilege of Priests to pronounce Absolution, as if it inferred a Power to damn and save; though it be really no more than what any Man may pronounce to another, or to himself, or to many, if they desire it, or will hear it. Has not this therefore, as well as many other pious Practices, been horribly abused and perverted by the ungodly Craft of selfish Priests?

Whilst I am giving you all this Trouble, and tiring you with so many Questions, permit me, holy Father, to mix a little Comfort with so much Freedom and Importunity. I am told that your Ease and Rest are greatly interrupted and broken by the Increase and Prevalence of *Free-thinking*. Be not too much frightened; the Mob and the Many will always be orthodox, always true to the Church,

Church, to Holy-Days, and pious Rioting, for Reasons too apparent to need mention. The Number of Free-thinkers, that is, of Men who bring all Things to the Bar and Trial of right Reason, can never be so very great as justly to alarm the Clergy, can never greatly diminish the Majority of a Country, who will always be of the Church in vogue, always have Religion, if not that of Reason and Nature, yet surely that of Authority and of the Priesthood, who are themselves always conformable to Establishments and Tithes, and the prevailing Faith.

I doubt it will not be equally pleasing to you, to be told, at least to have the Publick told, That it is by no means *Free-thinking* which fills the Goals, or loads the Gallows, or even peoples *Exchange-Alley*, or increases publick or private Knavery, or contributes at all towards it. Was the *South-Sea* Scheme the Effect of Free-thinking? Sir *John Blunt* was a great Saint and Frequenter of the Ordinances; nor were any of his Confederates suspected of Deism. Was it *Free thinking* that contrived or promoted national Massacres, that of *Ireland* or of *Paris*? Has it produced or assisted the Inquisition or Persecution? Was the Monk *St. Dominic* a Free-thinker, or was Bishop *Laud* one? Has Freethinking encouraged, or have Free-thinkers perpetrated particular Murders or Assassinations? Was *Ravillac* a Free-thinker, or was he who murdered the *Prince of Orange*? Or was he one, who offered to murder the late King? Are the Banditti and Assassins in *Italy* Free thinkers? Are not these Villains good Catholicks, and Frequenters of Churches? Do any of our own Thieves die Free-thinkers? Do they not generally die good Churchmen, Catholick or Protestant, and always

of

of some Religion? Was the famous Murtheress *Sarah Malcolm* a Free-thinker? Did she die one, or declare that she had lived one?

No; holy Father! *Free-thinking* has no Proselytes in *Newgate* or *Exchange-Alley*. I doubt it will be found that it is not Free-thinking that steals in Shops, or cheats behind Counters, or robs Houses, or cuts Throats. Nor is it Free-thinking that *absolves* Criminals of any sort, much less *Traitors* and *Assassins*; nor consequently encourages such Crimes. I could, had I Time, enlarge with Success on this Subject, and convince all Men, that Free-thinking disclaims all Alliance with Vice and Mobs, and dissolute Men; and leaves all Knaves, Profligates, and Hypocrites, to *Conformity* and *Creeds*, and the numerous Train of *Orthodoxy*.

It seems you have likewise found great Evils occasioned by People's not coming to Church. My own Opinion is, that when People find themselves edified by going, they will go: When they are not edified, their going avails not. If the People had the Choice of their own Ministers, as in the primitive Times they had, 'tis more than probable they would go oftner. But when they neither like the Man nor the Matter, 'tis not likely that they will hear either. I was therefore surprized to hear that some of your *Scouts* and humble Agents, (employ'd, I suppose, to try the Pulse of the Publick) have mentioned *compulsory Laws*, still in Force, to oblige People to go to Church. Pray, can you reconcile such a Law, if there be one, to the Principles and Laws of Toleration? Could any such

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Law

Law be at first procured but by the Sollicitations of the persecuting Clergy? Or could any but Persecutors solicit such a Law? Is it just or Christian, to force any Man to hear what or whom he likes not? Would a High-Churchman care to be forced to hear a Presbyterian Preacher, suppose in a Country where there were no other, as in *Geneva*? And should he not do as he would be done by? No penal Laws whatsoever were, or ever could be, prompted by a Christian Spirit. And besides this Consideration, I wonder how any Man can contend for the Continuance of Tests and Penalties here in *England*, as you do, and yet be against the Exercise of such in *Scotland*. Is this equal Justice, or equal Charity?

I should be quite too tedious to my Readers and myself (to you, holy Father, I fear I have been so already) should I but touch every Topick that deserves your Animadversion and that of the Publick. I cannot forbear mentioning one Practice very common amongst you *Churchmen*, though it be destitute of all Candor, of all Truth and Charity. Whenever any clerical Folly, or Artifice, or Usurpation, or false Position, is attacked, he who does so, scarce ever fails of being accused, of having attacked whatever is *serious* and *sacred*; and he is confidently charged with Irreligion, though he has evidently espoused and defended Religion against such as had profaned it, and blended it with Superstition and Power.

This Method of yours may have some Effect upon the Vulgar; but with Men of Sense, it hurts you,

you, by discovering what you mean by *Things serious and sacred*. If by these Words you understood only the *Gospel*, and *Conscience*, and the *Duties* enjoined by either, you could have taken no Offence at any Writings which commend and vindicate Christianity, and only expose what weakens and defaces it, even the Pride, and Violence of domineering and superstitious Priests. That there are such Priests, I presume you will not deny; nor that such Priests act not in all Things, or indeed hardly in any, upon the Foot and Motives of the *Gospel*.

That my late Sermon is intirely upon the Christian Scheme, and in the Christian Stile, I aver, and every Man may perceive; and therefore no Man, who regards Christianity and civil Liberty, can possibly dislike it. What it attacks is clerical Wantonness, clerical Superstition and Fury, Tyranny and Usurpation, both in the State and in the Church. If therefore that Sermon provoke you, it is manifest what pleases you, what you approve, and what you pursue. For myself I can say truly, and therefore boldly, that my Writings are entirely conformable to the Religion and Laws of my Country: Nor can any impartial Judge affirm of that Sermon, or of any Performance of mine (if there be any more of mine, besides that and this) what I have often heard the ablest Lawyers in this Nation affirm of a bulky Performance of yours, *That it is a Libel upon the Laws and Constitution of England, and ought to be burned by the Hand of the Common Hangman.*

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Here

Here I humbly bend my Knee, holy Father, and
kissing your Vestment, subscribe myself with pro-
found Adoration,

Your Great Admirer,

And Dutiful Son,

*Lincoln's-Inn,
March 8. 1732-3.*

A LAYMAN.

F I N I S.



